

## Community resources

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*courage is contagious*

## Viewing cable 08ATHENS1570, GREECE/TURKEY: NAVAL STANDOFF OVER OIL EXPLORATION

If you are new to these pages, please read an introduction on the [structure of a cable](#) as well as how to [discuss them](#) with others. See also the [FAQs](#)

### Understanding cables

Every cable message consists of three parts:

- The top box shows each cables unique reference number, when and by whom it originally was sent, and what its initial classification was.
- The middle box contains the header information that is associated with the cable. It includes information about the receiver(s) as well as a general subject.
- The bottom box presents the body of the cable. The opening can contain a more specific subject, references to other cables ([browse by origin](#) to find them) or additional comment. This is followed by the main contents of the cable: a summary, a collection of specific topics and a comment section.

To understand the justification used for the classification of each cable, please use this [WikiSource](#) article as reference.

### Discussing cables

If you find meaningful or important information in a cable, please link directly to its unique reference number. Linking to a specific paragraph in the body of a cable is also possible by copying the appropriate link (to be found at the paragraph symbol). Please mark messages for social networking services like Twitter with the hash tags **#cablegate** and a hash containing the reference ID e.g. **#08ATHENS1570**.

Reference ID	Created	Released	Classification	Origin
<a href="#">08ATHENS1570</a>	<a href="#">2008-11-18 15:57</a>	<a href="#">2011-08-30 01:44</a>	<a href="#">CONFIDENTIAL</a>	<a href="#">Embassy Athens</a>

Appears in these articles:

[www.tanea.gr](http://www.tanea.gr)

VZCZCXYZ0000  
OO RUEHWEB

DE RUEHTH #1570/01 3231557  
ZNY CCCCC ZZH  
O 181557Z NOV 08 ZDK  
FM AMEMBASSY ATHENS  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2807  
INFO RUEHZG/NATO EU COLLECTIVE PRIORITY  
RUEHNC/AMEMBASSY NICOSIA PRIORITY 2977  
RUEHNY/AMEMBASSY OSLO PRIORITY 0218  
RUEHEG/AMEMBASSY CAIRO PRIORITY 0318  
RHMFISS/EUCOM POLAD VAIHINGEN GE PRIORITY  
RHMFISS/NAVSUPPACT SOUDA BAY GR PRIORITY  
RHMFISS/COMSIXTHFLT PRIORITY  
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L ATHENS 001570

SIPDIS

DEPT ALSO FOR EUR/SE

E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/17/2018  
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PARM](#) [MOPS](#) [GR](#) [TU](#)  
SUBJECT: GREECE/TURKEY: NAVAL STANDOFF OVER OIL EXPLORATION  
VESSEL "OVER;" LONGER-TERM CONCERNS

Classified By: DCM Deborah McCarthy for 1.4 (b) and (d)

1. (C) In a 11/17 meeting with Ambassador Speckhard, MFA Secretary General Aristides Agathocles confirmed that the immediate crisis is "over" with Turkey over a Norwegian ship accompanied by a Turkish frigate that had been conducting oil exploration approximately eighty miles south of the Greek island of Kastelorizo (ref A). Following intervention by FM Bakoyannis with the Norwegian Foreign Minister and Greek approaches in Ankara, the vessel ceased its exploration and had departed the area.

2. (C) Agathocles -- a former Greek PremRep to the EU -- said he was "frustrated" by this situation. Greece and Turkey had been close to "reaching agreement" on continental shelf issues from 1999 to 2004 in the context of decisions on Turkish EU accession. However, this issue didn't get resolved, and as long as things are "left to chance," there will continue to be incidents. Furthermore, Greece has not changed its position. If progress isn't made, Greece will ultimately have to raise these issues in the context of Turkey's EU accession; this is neither in Greek nor Turkish interest.

3. (C) The Ambassador emphasized the importance of addressing Aegean-related disputes through diplomatic, and not military, means. He also reiterated our desire to see these issues resolved equitably and on the basis of international law.

4. (C) Agathocles briefly raised the November 13 incident in which a Turkish naval vessel drove off two seismic research vessels working in agreement with Cypriot authorities (ref B). Agathocles said he did not believe the two incidents were linked, but added that Cypriot officials had told him that the area where the two vessels had been operating was "beyond areas claimed by Turkey -- at least until now."

5. (C) MFA Aegean unit chief Liliana Grammatika told A/Political Counselor that the Greek MFA believed that the issue had been resolved by Norway and not/not Turkey. After FM Bakoyannis spoke to Norwegian FM Store on November 15, Greece received assurances from both the Norwegian government and the Norwegian company that owned the vessel in question that it would no longer conduct operations in an area that Greece claimed as part of its continental shelf. Grammatika added that the vessel had not departed the area until Sunday due to "either mechanical problems or something else," but was now "no longer there." Grammatika noted that the Norwegian MFA website now had a short statement on the issue, which noted that while Norway does not take positions on unresolved issues of maritime delimitation between third States, it is essential for Norwegian companies to "ensure that they have all necessary authorizations."

6. (C) Grammatika added that Greece has consistently raised the question of the delimitation of the continental shelf in the Grek-Turkish "exploratory talks," but that there has been "no progress." Greece wants this resolved "on the basis of international law." She reiterated that Greece's position on the continental shelf "differs" from Turkey's, in that Greece asserts that under international law, the continental shelf should extend 200 miles from national territory, including islands. Turkey argues that the continental shelf extends only from the mainland and excludes islands. She added that Greece recognizes that Turkey has legitimate interests that need to be addressed, and it is for that reason that Greece continues to seek arbitration, preferably from the ICJ, on the question of the continental shelf.

7. (C) Turkish Charge told DCM he had been called to the Foreign Ministry on Saturday, November 15, over the Norwegian ship exploration. In his view, the GOG was focused on avoiding press criticism of how it handled the issue. Noting

that the continental shelf disputes had been going on for years, he added that Greece, in his opinion, would rather deal with the issues in the context of EU accession, since other mechanisms such as the ICJ would not necessarily be favorable to Greece. Overall, he commented, the tone of the

relationship was good at the political level.  
SPECKHARD